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RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001765

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: DTP CLOSED, TWO MPS BANNED FROM POLITICS

REF: A. ANKARA 1749

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1743

[1](#)C. ANKARA 1656

Classified By: CDA Doug Silliman, for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The Constitutional Court ruled on December 11 to close the Democratic Society Party (DTP) because of their organic connection with the terrorist Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). In recent weeks, the DTP has been progressively showing their close links with the PKK. Prior to the Court's ruling, DTP officials believed closure to be imminent. Pro-PKK DTP members have been making a strong public effort to press the government to take jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as an interlocutor for peace talks, release him from jail, or at least improve his conditions. The formal political wing of the PKK announced on December 10 that widespread violence would follow if the DTP were closed by the Court. Meanwhile, coordinated protests across Turkey by the DTP and PKK, along with protests outside Turkey, show that the PKK still controls a vast organization. The closure will complicate the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) National Unity Project. END SUMMARY.

Court Closes DTP

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Constitutional Court ruled unanimously on December 11 to close the DTP because it was a "center against the unity of the state and the nation." President of the Court, Hasim Kilic, stated in a press conference that the closure was based on the provisions of the Turkish Political Parties Law. The court also handed down five-year bans from politics for DTP leader Ahmet Turk, MP Aysel Tugluk, and 35 other party members based on articles of the Turkish Constitution. Kilic noted that the European Court of Human Rights has agreed with the closure of political parties for support and association with a terrorist organizations. DTP Progressively More Extreme

[1](#)3. (C) In the weeks preceding the Constitutional Court's decision against the DTP, the party moved, in statement and action, closer to the PKK. Both DTP co-chairs Ahmet Turk and Emine Ayna stated that the number one priority for the DTP was better prison conditions for PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and the government's engaging him as an interlocutor for the Kurds. Ayna even stated that the DTP would have to "go back to the mountains" if the party were closed -- a reference to rejoining the violent activity of the PKK. DTP MP Sebahat

Tuncel told us on December 9 that DTP is not a political representative of the PKK and in the same breath argued that the PKK needs to be removed from the terrorist list because its violence is justified. The PKK, she claimed, was forced to resort to violence in order to accomplish its legitimate goals.

¶4. (C) Moderate DTP MPs Bengi Yildiz and Sirri Sakik, however, told us on December 10 that the more extreme wing of the party was saying things that are "ridiculous." Still, when asked why they were not publicly speaking out and distancing themselves from the PKK, Sakik responded that it was impossible to "put distance between yourself and your father or son," explaining that so many DTP supporters had children or family members in the PKK that moderation is a difficult prospect. Yildiz explained that the DTP (at least the more moderate wing) wants to be a major actor in finding a solution to the Kurdish issue but neither the state nor the PKK want them to succeed.

DTP Believed Closure Imminent

¶5. (C) All DTP members that we spoke with thought that party closure was imminent. Yildiz, a former lawyer, said that if he were a judge, he would "probably" decide to close the party based on the law. However, he suggested that in order to prevent widespread demonstrations he would probably permit party members to remain in politics. This, according to Yildiz, would allow the DTP to form another party, permit DTP MPs to stay in parliament, and give the Kurds in the

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Southeast the feeling that their voices were still represented. All DTP contacts stressed, however, that if the court banned any DTP members from politics, all DTP MPs would immediately resign. (Note: For that to happen, the Parliamentary Speaker must accept the resignations, which many of our contacts view as unlikely. End Note)

¶6. (C) The formal political wing of the PKK, the KCK, promised that if the DTP was closed they would spread the demonstrations from the Southeast to major cities across Turkey, attack rival political parties in the Southeast, and pressure all Kurdish MPs from other parties to resign. (Note: There are 79 Kurdish MPs from the AKP, one from the CHP, one from the MHP, and one independent Kurdish MP. End Note) However, DTP Leader Ahmet Turk issued a statesmanlike announcement soon after the closure, asking everyone to "rethink and work for people to embrace each other." He added that "democracy and peace would prevail." He said the DTP would announce its roadmap for the future December 12.

Protests and Clashes Had Been Growing

¶7. (SBU) Protests by DTP and PKK members in support of Ocalan have increased in recent days, as have attacks on DTP offices across the country. Turkish security forces have been restrained in recent protests. Demonstrations demanding the release of Ocalan have also spread in the last week to cities abroad including Strasbourg, Marseilles, Cape Town, and London. The Turkish National Police (TNP) Director who handles PKK terrorist activities reported to RSO December 11 that, faced with the possibility of a DTP closure, the TNP has been rounding up known PKK organizers in an attempt to reduce the possibility of violent protests.

¶8. (SBU) In a December 11 statement issued through his lawyers before the announcement of the closure, Ocalan was considerably more restrained than his supporters, indicating that he did not oppose the National Unity Project, but that the method for implementing reforms is wrong. He also stated that if the Court closed the DTP, it would not be the "end of the world." Members of the party would continue their struggle. Ocalan further stressed that he does not insist

that he be an interlocutor for the government, but instead indicated that the DTP could play such a role. However, he stated that he was the only one who could control and disarm the PKK.

Comment

¶9. (C) The closure of the DTP will put the AKP government in an even more difficult position as they attempt to proceed with their National Unity Project. The nationalist CHP and MHP parties, rather than reaching out to moderate Kurds to isolate the advocates of violence, have lumped all overtures to the Kurds as concessions to the PKK, further polarizing the issue. PKK's claim of responsibility for the December 7 attack in Tokat which killed seven soldiers only aggravates the situation.

¶10. (C) We expect the main actors of the DTP to reorganize into a new political party. However, with the moderate wing of the DTP largely sidelined, it is quite unlikely that any new Kurdish party will be more supportive of the GOT's outreach efforts to Kurds, at least in the short run.
Silliman

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